ix) Optimum utilization of existing capacity.

x) RFP to include an Offset Clause for contracts valued at Rs. 300 Crores and above.

xi) Re-examine the concept of Negative List for Defence exports and setting up of Export Marketing Organisation.

(d) The recommendations made by the Committee including that relating to providing a level-playing field to Private Sector Industry in Defence Production are under examination.

Closure of Srinagar and Avantipur airfields due to snowfall

2988. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recent heavy snowfall in J&K made our Srinagar and Avantipur airfields non-operational for five days;

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take so that such a situation does not recur especially in IAF airfields which are strategically located surrounded by hostile environmental hazards; and

(c) whether we have developed any contigencies plans for meeting such a situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Srinagar and Avantipur airfields were not closed for five days during the recent snowfall. However, Srinagar airfield was closed on 19.2.2005 and 20.2.2005 (2 days) due to unusually heavy snowfall of 10.2 cms and 4.4 cms respectively. Similarly, Avantipur airfield remained closed from 18.2.2005 to 21.2.2005 (4 days) due to unusually heavy snowfall recorded in the range of 0.9 cm to 10.1 cms during the period.

(b) and (c) To combat heavy snow accumulation at the forward airfields, snow clearance equipment is kept ready and deployed immediately on commencement of snowfall.